

## Cottage Industry Mushrooms Over Davis Estate Battle

By Drew Combs  
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Few combinations lead to the chancing of billable hours quite like a dead rich guy and an unhappy heir.

In this case, the dead rich guy is Marvin Davis, who over the course of his life brought and sold marquee assets such as Pebble Beach and 20th Century Fox movie studio.

The unhappy heir is his daughter Patricia Davis Raynes, a New York socialite, who filed a lawsuit last year in federal court in Los Angeles against her father's estate and much of her immediate family.

The suit, which alleges that Marvin Davis "systematically stole hundreds of million of dollars from a trust created for" Davis Raynes, has resulted in a mini bonanza, with more than a dozen California firms and local offices of national firms being brought in by various parties to the family dispute.

Gibson Dunn & Crutcher, Skadden Arps Slate Meagher & Flom and O'Melveny & Myers are just three of the firms involved in the case.

The lawsuit has been partially stayed by Judge Audrey B. Collins until the conclusion of an arbitration hearing against defendant and former-Davis Petroleum Corp. executive Kenneth R. Kilroy.

But lawyers continue to spar over issues such as a pretrial motion in which one firm is seeking to disqualify another and the appropriateness of crashing a party to serve a subpoena.

Barring a settlement, arbitration proceedings are expected to begin early next year.

While an arbitration hearing is months off, and an actual trial even further in the future, the case continues to generate media attention.

A New York gossip column recently reported that lawyers for Kilroy sent a process server to a party being thrown for Davis Raynes to subpoena her husband, Marty Raynes.

Kilroy is represented by Gerard P. Fox and his Century City firm, Fox & Spillane. Raul Perez, an attorney at Fox & Spillane, confirmed that Raynes was served at a party.

"We didn't mean to ruin their party," Perez said, "but he is a very important witness, and it was difficult to serve him the deposition subpoena."



ROBERT LEVINS / Daily Journal

"I find it flattering that they think it is worthwhile to try to disqualify me," said Christensen Glaser's Kevin J. Leichter, who represents Barbara Davis. One group of lawyers is trying to disqualify any lawyer at the firm.

David W. Shapiro, an Oakland-based partner at Boies Schiller & Flexner, said that ruining the party was exactly what attorneys at Fox & Spillane had in mind.

"We told Kilroy's lawyers that we would accept notice for Mr. Raynes," Shapiro said, "but they went ahead and served him in an attempt to embarrass him in front of his friends."

Davis Raynes is represented in the case by Shapiro, famed litigator David Boies and Fred Norton, a Boies Schiller Oakland-based attorney.

Barbara Davis, Marvin Davis' widow, is represented by Kevin J. Leichter, a partner at Christensen, Glaser, Fink, Jacobs, Weil & Shapiro.

Initially, the family matriarch was represented by former name partner Louis R. "Skip" Miller. But according to knowledgeable sources, she decided to remain with the Century City-based firm following Miller's departure to start his own firm.

Leichter declined to comment on the switch other than to say, "I am proud to have been selected to represent Mrs. Davis."

That representation is being challenged by lawyers for Davis Raynes.

According to Shapiro, Davis Raynes initially consulted Patricia Glaser, a name partner at Christensen Glaser,

about representing her.

In a motion seeking to disqualify any attorney at Christensen Glaser, attorneys at Boies Schiller argue that an attorney-client relationship was created between Glaser and Davis Raynes.

"I find it flattering that they think it is worthwhile to try to disqualify me," Leichter said, "such that they need to invent the flimsiest of grounds to attempt to do so."

A ruling on the motion is expected any day.

If Christensen Glaser is disqualified, given the legal firepower of other Davis family members, it is unlikely Barbara Davis will be hiring a low-profile lawyer.

Skadden Arps Slate Meagher & Flom represents movie producer John Davis, one of Davis Raynes' brothers. Her other brother, Gregg Davis, is represented by Gibson Dunn.

In the complaint, Davis Raynes alleges that her brothers, whom she describes as "favored," and her mother conspired with Marvin Davis to loot a trust that had been established for her.

Davis Raynes' two sisters are represented in the case by the law firms Proskauer Rose and Milbank Tweed

Hadley & McCloy.

Attorneys at O'Melveny & Myers, Latham & Watkins, Allen Matkins Leck Gamble Mallory & Natsis and Musick Peeler & Garrett also represent parties to the suit.

Shapiro said the collection of top-shelf legal power contradicts the family's claims of poverty.

"It seems to me," he said, "that other family members have enough money to hire expensive lawyers even though they claim to have no money."

A family lawyer is also a party to the suit.

Marvin Davis' longtime lawyer, Leonard Silverstein at Buchanan Ingersoll, is represented in the lawsuit by Reed Smith.

"We are sorry to see a lawyer as distinguished as Leonard Silverstein dragged into what is essentially a family dispute," said Peter J. Kennedy, a Los Angeles-based partner at Reed Smith.

And according to one lawyer, the Davis family is no longer the only family involved in the dispute.

"Living together with all the other lawyers," Leichter said, "it's like we have become a family of our own."